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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 012602

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [SNAR](#) [PINR](#) [CO](#) [OAS](#) [AUC](#)

SUBJECT: THREE MORE AUC DEMOBILIZATIONS

REF: BOGOTA 12188

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

11. (C) The GOC continues to demobilize elements of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC). As of December 8, 510 out of about 1,500 paramilitaries from the Catatumbo Bloc had registered in their demobilization zone in Norte de Santander Department. They are scheduled to publicly demobilize on December 10. On December 9, 147 paramilitaries in northern Cundinamarca Department demobilized, and on December 4, 47 paramilitaries in southern Magdalena Department demobilized. If GOC plans to demobilize 700 members of the AUC's Northern Bloc in Cordoba Department succeed by the end of the year, the Government will have almost reached its goal of demobilizing 3,000 paramilitary fighters in 2004. End Summary.

Catatumbo Bloc: Demobilization Almost Complete

12. (C) As of December 8, 510 out of nearly 1,500 members of the AUC's Catatumbo Bloc -- including AUC Commander Salvatore Mancuso -- had registered in their demobilization zone in Norte de Santander Department, received provisional identification cards, and completed a survey on demographic information and employment plans. Mancuso and other paramilitaries facing criminal charges for serious crimes will remain in a concentration area, probably the principal zone surrounding the village of Santa Fe de Ralito, Cordoba Department. Rank and file members accused only of membership in an illegal armed group will begin departing the Norte de Santander demobilization zone after a public demobilization ceremony currently scheduled for December 10. Following their demobilization, former AUC fighters must report to a reinsertion center in the nearby town of Tibu to register for reinsertion benefits. Contacts at the GOC's Office of the High Commissioner for Peace Office estimate bloc members will turn in approximately 900 weapons.

13. (C) On November 29, the GOC issued a resolution creating a demobilization zone on the "Brisas del Sardinata" estate, located in the rural district of Campo Dos, in Tibu municipality. Paramilitaries present within the zone cannot be arrested before December 30. Police and military are responsible for security around the zone and in areas formerly dominated by the demobilizing AUC forces. The Army transferred a counter guerrilla battalion from Arauca Department to Tibu to assist with security.

Cundinamarca Self-Defense Forces: Demobilization Complete

14. (U) One December 9, 147 paramilitaries from the Self-Defense Forces of Cundinamarca demobilized in a public ceremony at an agricultural institute in the rural district of Teran, Yacopi municipality, Cundinamarca Department, approximately 60 miles north of Bogota. The demobilization zone will last until December 30. On November 29, the GOC issued a resolution suspending arrest warrants nationwide against the group's commander, Luis Eduardo Cifuentes, aka "El Aguila," until December 30, so he could leave the concentration zone at Santa Fe de Ralito and manage the demobilization. Group members turned in 137 weapons (mostly rifles and handguns), several dozen radios, and some explosives. The police and military have a relatively strong presence in the region where the group operated in northern Cundinamarca, and the Peace Commissioner's Office has told us the possibility of a guerrilla resurgence in the aftermath of the paramilitary demobilization is not a serious concern.

Southern Magdalena Paramilitaries: Small-Scale and Simple

15. (C) On December 4, 47 paramilitaries demobilized in the rural district of Santa Rosa, Santa Ana municipality,

southern Magdalena Department. The GOC passed a resolution lifting arrest warrants nationwide against the group's commander, Jose Maria Barrera, aka "Chepe Barrera," until December 30. The group was only loosely affiliated with the AUC, and its small size and secure area of operations made the demobilization relatively simple and straightforward.

Only Cordoba Remains for 2004

16. (C) The demobilizations of these three groups and the Bananero Bloc on November 25 (reftel) brings the total number of paramilitaries demobilized in 2004 to approximately 2,050. About 700 paramilitaries from the AUC's Northern Bloc in Cordoba Department are scheduled to demobilize by the end of December, but protests from local cattle ranchers have complicated the effort. If the 700 demobilize before the end of the year, the GOC will have almost reached its goal of demobilizing 3,000 paramilitary fighters in 2004.
WOOD